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IN THE SPECIFICATION:

(1) The paragraph from page 13, line 2 to page 13, line 19 has been amended as follows:

Heat drying treatment according to an embodiment of the present invention will now be described. Fig. 1 shows the structure of an apparatus 20 used for heat drying treatment. Superheated water vapor herein refers to unsaturated water vapor exhibiting high drying ability produced by, for example, reheating saturated water vapor generated from a boiler 1 in a water vapor heater 2. The superheated water vapor has a temperature in the range of 130 to 230°C. For the reheating of the saturated water vapor, it is advantageous in terms of temperature control to use a metal plate heated by electromagnetic induction as a heat source. Use of ~~Water~~ water vapor of a saturated or a supersaturated type with low drying ability causes excessive water to penetrate the raw material during the treatment, consequently requiring a drying step. Particularly in granulation, a strong binding force is eventually generated between the fine particles, accordingly reducing the dispersibility in water of the fine particles after granulation.

(2) The paragraph from page 14, line 14 to page 15, line 3 has been amended as follows:

The treatment with the apparatus shown in Fig. 1 is performed under atmospheric pressure, that is, under a

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condition with an extremely small difference in pressure between the outside and inside of the apparatus. It is therefore necessary to take particular care not to retain the water vapor in the apparatus. In particular, the reservoir 4 is liable to cause such retention. If the temperature decreases while the water vapor remains, the drying ability is degraded. This ~~is~~ must be prevented. In order to induce a flow so as to prevent retention, for example, water vapor is forcibly discharged. The water vapor outlets 6 of the apparatus shown in Fig. 1 are based on a so-called natural chimney effect, ~~and are~~ each being an enforced system equipped with a motorized exhaust fan to ensure the chimney effect.

(3) The paragraph from page 16, line 2 to page 16, line 9 has been amended as follows:

Fig. 4 is a plan view of the lower mortar member 12. The lower mortar member 12 includes a plurality of segments (B) having parallel grooves 13. Fig. 5 is a bottom view of the upper mortar member 11. The upper mortar member 11 also includes a plurality of segments 13 having parallel grooves in the same manner as in the lower mortar member 12. However, the upper mortar member 11 and the lower mortar member 12 have different groove angles with respect to the axis.